

Modernisation of Railways

349. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the resource crunch is the main stumbling block in the way of modernising the railways to minimise accidents;

(b) whether maintenance of tracks, Switching over to electronic signalling and increase in the length of tracks of reduce density of traffic, are the immediate need to prevent recurrence of accidents; and

(c) if so, what immediate steps are being taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) The Railway Finances are presently passing through a difficult phase. This notwithstanding, safety works are being carried out based on their priority within the available resources. The plan expenditure on safety in the last three years has been as under:—

	(Rs. in crore)
1998-99	2313
1999-2000	2656
2000-01(RE)	2902

However, much more is needed. Separately, a pilot project for development and testing of an anti-collision device has been taken up on Northeast Frontier Railway at a cost of Rs. 50 crore. Various other steps have also been taken to strengthen safety, including provision of walkietalkie sets to Drivers & Guards.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. Maintenance of assets, modernisation and upgradation of Railway System is a continuous and on going process depending upon availability of funds and resources. Track maintenance is presently being done by adopting modern technological methods. Following steps are being taken for further augmenting track structure and its maintenance:

- (i) 52 Kg rails are being replaced with heavier rail sections of 60 Kg depending upon the need of the traffic,

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- (ii) Fish plated joints are being replaced with welded joints wherever feasible.
- (iii) Steel/Wooden sleepers are being replaced with concrete sleepers.
- (iv) More and more track is being brought under mechanised maintenance gradually.
- (v) Quality of rails have been improved.
- (vi) In service testing of rails through ultrasonic flaw detecting machine is being done to detect the defects in rail before they grow to failure size.

Improvement in Signalling system are being carried out by means of following:

- (i) Replacement of Overaged Signalling assets by Centralised operation of points and signals (more than 2200 stations provided so far).
- (ii) Track circuiting (completed from Fouling Mark to Fouling Mark at all stations on A, B, C, D spl & D routes where trains run at a speed 75 kmph).

Doubling of Samastipur-Gorakhpur Broad Gauge Rail Line

† 350. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any proposal to double the broad gauge line between Samastipur in Bihar and Gorakhpur is under consideration of Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) Double line already exists between Muzaffarpur and Siho and between Samastipur and Karpurigram. Between Gorakhpur and Muzaffarpur 2 lines exist

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.